

About Our Worship

Christ Jesus came in the flesh not to be served but to serve and give his life as a ransom for many. Now ascended to the right hand of the Father, where he ever intercedes for us, he serves us today through his appointed means: the Gospel proclaimed and through Holy Baptism, Holy Absolution, and Holy Communion. Through these means—God’s service to us, his liturgy in its primary sense—the Holy Spirit creates and sustains faith where and when it pleases God.

The conferral of God’s gifts of forgiveness, life, and salvation cannot be done apart from his means of grace, and these means cannot be delivered in a vacuum. They require a form. Thus, the Lutheran Church has, throughout her history, employed the rites (orders of service) of the church that have been handed down since the earliest days of Christianity. Chief among them is the Divine Service, the service of Word and Sacrament by which the faithful come into the presence of God to be nourished and strengthened for life in this world. (See an outline of this order in the column to the right.)

Holy Baptism is joyfully administered to infants and children who are brought by their parents. Unbaptized adults are also baptized after instruction in the faith. Every Christian is reminded that one’s whole life is lived in remembrance of Baptism, as sins are daily confessed and the sinner is revived by God’s forgiving grace.

Holy Absolution is the blessed gift of God by which Christ, speaking through the mouth of the pastor, his called servant, forgives all sins. The Divine Service regularly begins with a corporate form of Confession and Absolution. Christians are also encouraged to make use of Individual Confession and Absolution (see LSB 292) by which they confess to the pastor specific sins that trouble them. Far from an embarrassing burden, this act brings great comfort, for the penitent hears Christ’s forgiving word, no matter how egregious the sin that has been confessed. Individual Confession and Absolution is available at any time by making an appointment with the pastor.

Holy Communion is God’s ongoing means of strengthening sinners who live in a broken and dying world. Contrary to all reason, the Church confesses that Christ is with us always (Matthew 28:20) not in some vague way, but with his very body and blood, bringing life and salvation. Commanded by Christ to “do this...often” (1 Corinthians 11:23-25), the Church has historically celebrated the Sacrament every Lord’s Day (Sunday). While there is no law as to frequency of communion, regular reception is like a healthy vital sign regarding faith in Christ.

The Lutheran Church has historically practiced “closed” communion in the belief that the Sacrament requires faith in Christ’s words that his body and blood are

truly present. Furthermore, participation in the Sacrament is a sign of our unity in the faith with all those who join us at the rail. For that reason, we ask that those communing be members of St. Paul's or congregations of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, as well as congregations of church bodies with whom we are in fellowship. Our denial of admission to those who are members of another confession is not a judgment upon their faith, but a recognition that we hold to different confessions concerning God, salvation, and the Sacrament itself. Such individuals are invited to speak with the pastor following the service.